School Quality Review Report

Muessel Primary Center

South Bend Community School Corporation

4/12/2018 – 4/13/2018

Review Team Members

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I.   Background on the School Quality Review

Public Law 221 (PL 221) was passed in 1999 before the enactment of the federal *No Child Left behind Act* (NCLB). It serves as the state's accountability framework. Among other sanctions, the law authorizes the Indiana State Board of Education (SBOE) to assign an expert team to conduct a School Quality Review for schools placed in the lowest category or designation of school performance for two consecutive years.

> *(a) The board shall direct that the department conduct a quality review of a school that is subject to IC 20-31-9-3. (b) The board shall determine the scope of the review and appoint an expert team under IC 20-31-9-3. (Indiana State Board of Education; 511 IAC 6.2-8-2; filed Jan 28, 2011, 3:08 p.m.: 20110223-IR-511100502FRA)*

The school quality review (SQR) is a needs assessment meant to evaluate the academic program and operational conditions within an eligible school. The SQR will result in actionable feedback that will promote improvement, including the reallocation of resources or requests for technical assistance. The process is guided by a rubric (see Appendix B) aligned to the 8 Turnaround Principles. The school quality review includes a pre-visit analysis and planning meeting, onsite comprehensive review, and may include targeted follow-up visits.

State law authorizes the SBOE to establish an expert team to conduct the School Quality Review known as the Technical Assistance Team (TAT). Membership must include representatives from the community or region the school serves; and, may consist of school superintendents, members of governing bodies, teachers from high performing school corporations, and special consultants or advisers.
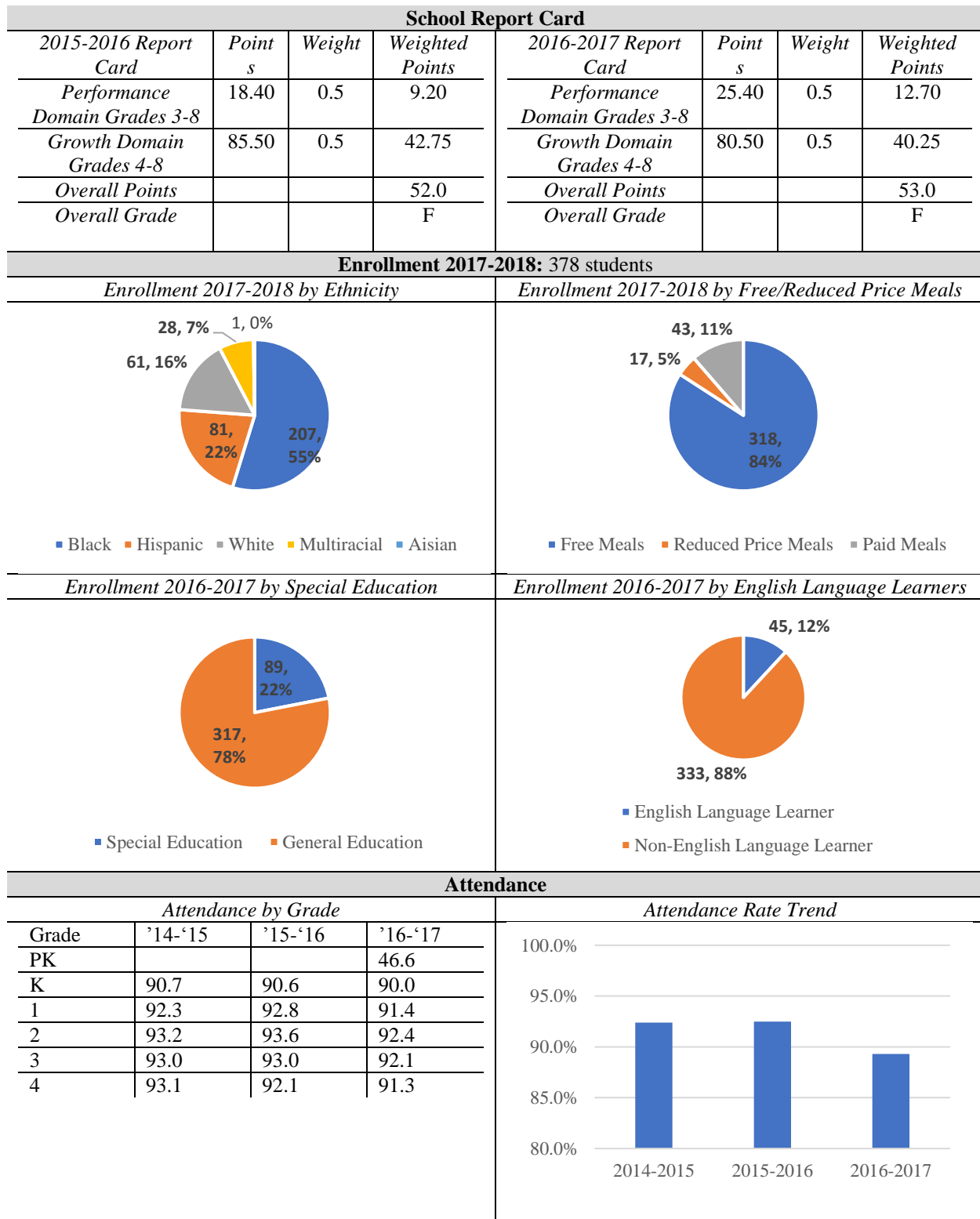

II.   Overview of the School Quality Review Process

The School Quality Review process is designed to identify Muessel Primary Center's strengths and areas for improvement organized around the [United States Department of Education's Eight School Turnaround Principles](). In particular, the School Quality Review process focused on three Turnaround Principles that were identified as priorities by the school and its district.

The on-site review consisted of the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) visiting the school for two days. During the two days, the TAT (1) conducted separate focus groups with students, teachers, community members and parents, (2) observed a professional learning community meeting with teachers, (3) observed instruction in 37 classrooms, and (4) interviewed school and district leaders.

Prior to the visit, teachers completed an online survey, with 25 teachers participating. Parents were also invited to complete a survey, with 7 participating. Finally, the school leadership team completed a self-evaluation. Both surveys and the self-evaluation are made up of questions that align to school improvement principles and indicators (Appendix B).
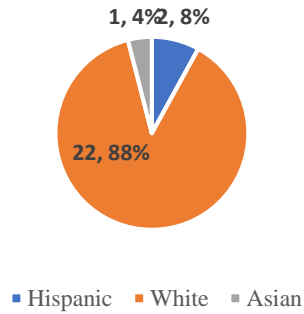
III. Data Snapshot for Muessel Primary Center[1]

				School Report Card			
2015-2016 Report Card	*Points*	*Weight*	*Weighted Points*	*2016-2017 Report Card*	*Points*	*Weight*	*Weighted Points*
Performance Domain Grades 3-8	18.40	0.5	9.20	*Performance Domain Grades 3-8*	25.40	0.5	12.70
Growth Domain Grades 4-8	85.50	0.5	42.75	*Growth Domain Grades 4-8*	80.50	0.5	40.25
Overall Points			52.0	*Overall Points*			53.0
Overall Grade			F	*Overall Grade*			F

Enrollment 2017-2018: 378 students

Enrollment 2017-2018 by Ethnicity	*Enrollment 2017-2018 by Free/Reduced Price Meals*

28, 7%   1, 0%
61, 16%
81, 22%
207, 55%

■ Black ■ Hispanic ■ White ■ Multiracial ■ Aisian

43, 11%
17, 5%
318, 84%

■ Free Meals ■ Reduced Price Meals ■ Paid Meals

Enrollment 2016-2017 by Special Education	*Enrollment 2016-2017 by English Language Learners*

89, 22%
317, 78%

■ Special Education ■ General Education

45, 12%
333, 88%

■ English Language Learner
■ Non-English Language Learner

Attendance

Attendance by Grade				*Attendance Rate Trend*
Grade	'14-'15	'15-'16	'16-'17	
PK			46.6	
K	90.7	90.6	90.0	
1	92.3	92.8	91.4	
2	93.2	93.6	92.4	
3	93.0	93.0	92.1	
4	93.1	92.1	91.3	

Attendance Rate Trend chart: 100.0%, 95.0%, 90.0%, 85.0%, 80.0% — 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017

[1] The data included in this snapshot was retrieved from the Indiana Department of Education's Compass website on March 22, 2018.
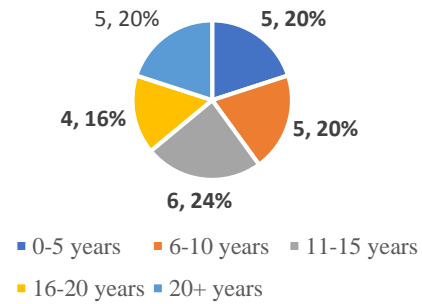
School Personnel

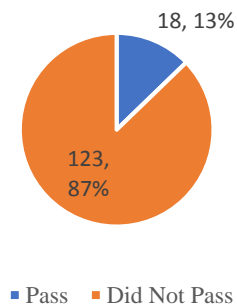*Teacher Count 2015-2016: 25*

Teacher Count 2015-2016 by Ethnicity

1, 4% 2, 8%

22, 88%

- Hispanic
- White
- Asian

Teacher Count 2015-2016 by Years of Experience

5, 20% **5, 20%**

4, 16% **5, 20%**

6, 24%

- 0-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 20+ years

Student Academic Performance

ISTEP+ 2016-2017 Both English/Language Arts and Math

18, 13%

123, 87%

- Pass
- Did Not Pass

ISTEP+ Percent Passing Trend Both English/Language Arts and Math

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
School	16.1%	16.1%	12.8%

- Statewide
- Corporation
- School
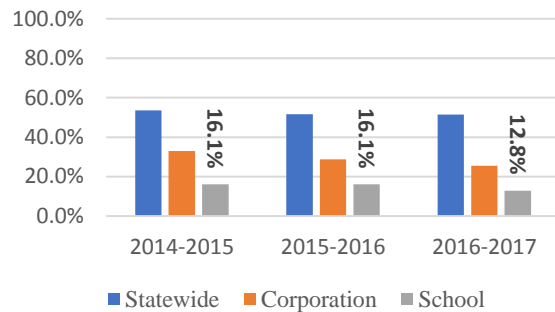
ISTEP+ 2016-2017: English/Language Arts

34, 24%

109, 76%
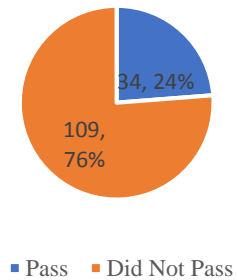
- Pass
- Did Not Pass

ISTEP+ Percent Passing Trend: English/Language Arts

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
School	34.0%	32.2%	23.8%

- Statewide
- Corporation
- School

ISTEP+ 2016-2017 Math

27, 18%

125, 82%

- Pass
- Did Not Pass

ISTEP+ Percent Passing Trend Math

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
School	21.9%	22.6%	17.8%

- Statewide
- Corporation
- School

IREAD-3 2016-2017	IREAD-3 Percent Passing Trend

IREAD-3 Percentage Promoted by Good Cause Exemptions 2016-2017	IREAD-3 Good Cause Promotion Exemption Trend
No Good Cause Exemptions	
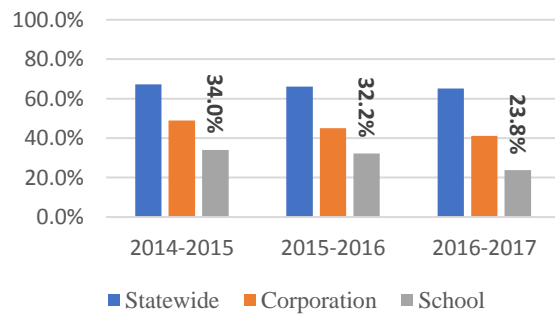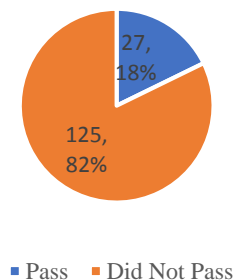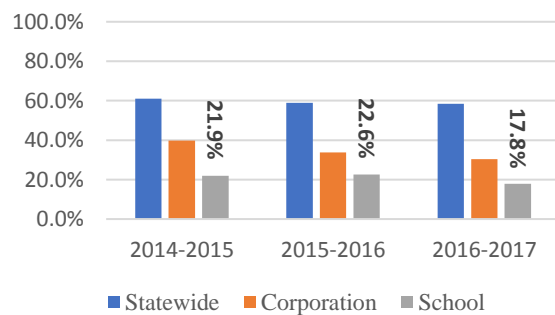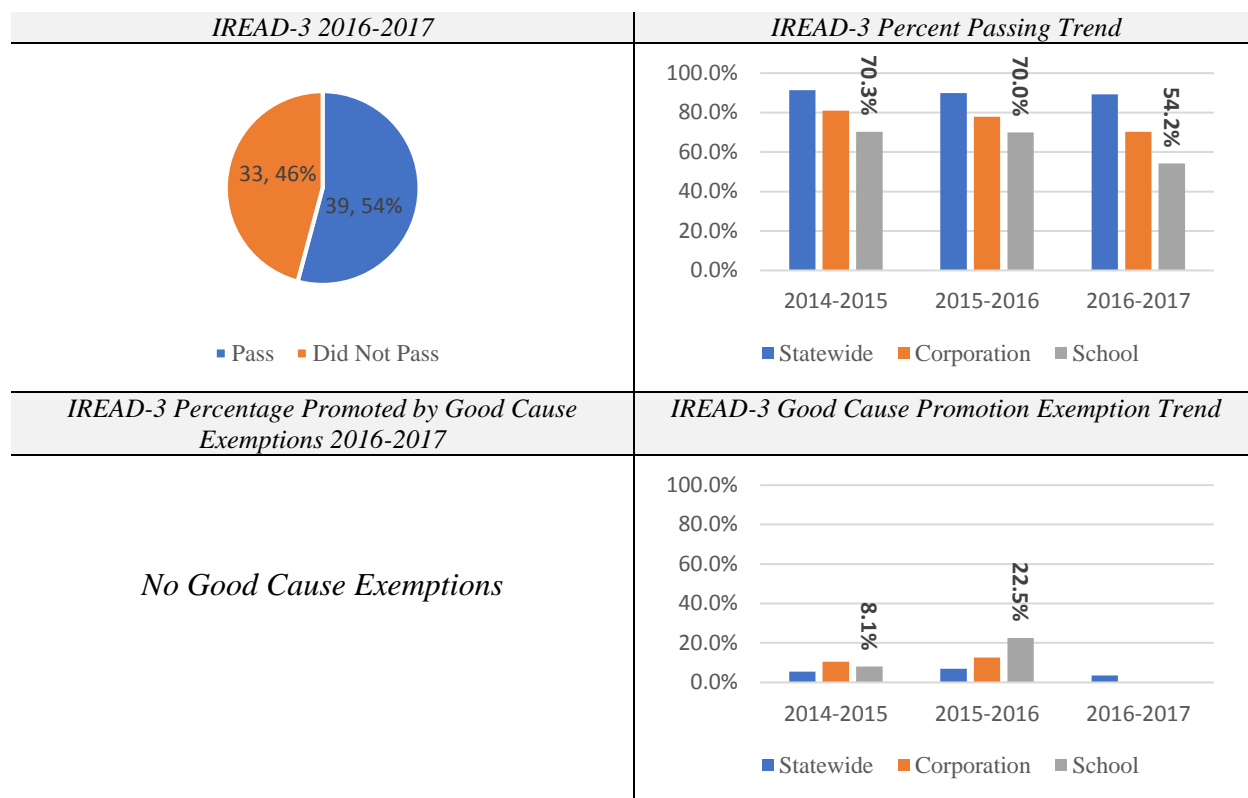
IV.   Evidence and Rating for School Turnaround Principle 2

Background
The next three sections of the report illustrate the Technical Assistance Team's key findings, supporting evidence, and overall rating for each of the school's prioritized Turnaround Principles.

To thoughtfully identify these prioritized Turnaround Principles, school and district leaders used a "Turnaround Principle Alignment Tool" provided by the Indiana State Board of Education to determine the two to three Turnaround Principles that most closely align with the goals and strategies outlined in the school's improvement plan.

This report focuses on these prioritized Turnaround Principles to provide a strategically targeted set of findings and recommendations. Additional evidence on the other five Turnaround Principles can be found in Appendix A of this report.

School Turnaround Principle 2: Climate and Culture			
Evidence Sources			
Classroom Observations, Teacher Focus Group, Student Focus Group, District Leadership Focus Group, Instructional Leadership Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Teacher Surveys, Artifacts Provided by Muessel Primary School			
Rating			
1 Ineffective *No evidence of this happening in the school*	2 Improvement Necessary *Limited evidence of this happening in the school*	3 Effective *Routine and consistent*	4 Highly Effective *Exceeds standard and drives student achievement*
Evidence			
Strengths			Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)
• On their survey, 75% of teachers agreed with the following statement, "Our school's organizational culture encourages trust, respect, and a sense of responsibility for student achievement."			• 2.1, 2.2, 1.2, 1.4
• Teacher focus groups and morning meeting observations revealed the positive impact Responsive Classroom is having on school climate and culture. Responsive Classroom provides an approach to education that focuses on the strong relationship between academic success and social-emotional learning.			• 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 1.2, 1.4, 3.2
• Multiple focus groups revealed the "Handling of Behavioral Expectations Infractions" guidance document and supports from the Cognitive Interventionist Strategist have contributed to a significant reduction in office referrals, student suspensions, and an increase in student attendance.			• 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 1.3, 1.4

Areas for Improvement	Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)
• Several examples of a deficit or fixed mindset concerning student ability were observed during classroom observations and in focus groups.	• 2.3, 3.1, 4.4
• In only 20% of classrooms observed did students interact with and support each other with their learning and assignments.	• 2.2, 3.6, 1.7
• In only 43% of classrooms observed were high expectations for academics evident.	• 2.2, 2.3, 3.6, 4.4, 1.5

V. Evidence and Rating for School Turnaround Principle 3

School Turnaround Principle 3: Effective Instruction

Evidence Sources
Classroom Observations, Teacher Focus Group, District Leadership Focus Group, Instructional Leadership Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Artifacts Provided by Muessel Primary School

Rating			
1 Ineffective *No evidence of this happening in the school*	2 Improvement Necessary *Limited evidence of this happening in the school*	3 Effective *Routine and consistent*	4 Highly Effective *Exceeds standard and drives student achievement*

Evidence	
Strengths	Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)
• An organized and comprehensive book room is available to teachers for supplemental curricular resources.	• 3.2, 4.4,
• Focus groups with district leadership, the principal, and teachers revealed that teachers have shown a willingness to attend optional professional development.	• 3.5, 3.6, 5.3, 5.5
• In 87% of classrooms observed, the room was arranged to support collaborative learning with easily identifiable work areas.	• 3.2, 2.2
Areas for Improvement	Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)
• While there are various instructional programs and initiatives present, there is no clear and focused instructional priority for the school.	• 3.2, 3.6, 1.2, 1.4,
• Classroom observations as well as principal and instructional leadership focus groups revealed expectations for guided reading and 90-minute reading blocks are not being implemented with fidelity.	• 3.2, 3.6, 1.5,
• The school reading plan was not submitted to the DOE online during the 2017 window (June 1st-30th). Furthermore, limited evidence was observed during classroom observations of the core reading programs, Reading Wonders and Wilson Fundations, being implemented with fidelity during the 90 minute reading block.	• 3.1, 3.4, 4.4, 1.5

VI. Evidence and Rating for School Turnaround Principle 4

School Turnaround Principle 4: Curriculum, Assessment, and Intervention Systems

Evidence Sources
Classroom Observations, Teacher Focus Group, District Leadership Focus Group, Instructional Leadership Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Artifacts Provided by Muessel Primary School

Rating			
1 Ineffective *No evidence of this happening in the school*	2 Improvement Necessary *Limited evidence of this happening in the school*	3 Effective *Routine and consistent*	4 Highly Effective *Exceeds standard and drives student achievement*

Evidence	
Strengths	Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)
• The district provides teachers with curriculum maps aligned to the Indiana Academic Standards. These curriculum maps also include formative assessments.	• 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 3.1
• The district provided comprehensive, week-long training on the use of Data Wise during the summer of 2017. The school followed up with building level training and professional development from August through December.	• 4.2, 4.5, 6.3, 1.1, 3.5
• The district provides multiple sources of formative assessment data for reading.	• 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 6.2
Areas for Improvement	Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)
• Instructional leadership and teacher focus groups revealed staff are examining multiple forms of data, but not digging deeper into the data and exploring the true causes behind student lack of growth to inform classroom instruction.	• 4.2, 4.3, 6.2, 6.3, 1.1
• Teachers are not using an understanding of what students need to know and be able to do to guide lesson planning. Lessons, both in terms of their objectives and instruction observed, were infrequently aligned to grade-level Indiana Academic Standards.	• 4.1, 4.4, 1.5, 3.1
• A systematic reading intervention process determined by assessment results was not evident. Furthermore, data is not being used to determine when students exit interventions due to increased reading and writing achievement.	• 4.3, 4.5, 1.6

VII. Recommendations

Background
This section outlines an intentionally targeted set of recommendations that align to one or more of the school's prioritized Turnaround Principles. Anchored in the United States Department of Education's Turnaround Principles framework, these recommendations are representative of what the Technical Assistance Team believes to be the most immediate changes needed to accelerate growth in academic and non-academic student outcomes at Muessel Primary Center. These recommendations should not be thought of as an exhaustive set of school improvement strategies, but rather as a part of the ongoing and continuous school improvement process.

Recommendation 1
Collaboratively identify two to three instructional priorities for the 2018-2019 school year that will have the biggest impact on improving classroom instruction and student growth. Create an organizational plan for each identified priority that (1) identifies SMART goal(s), (2) utilizes a professional development calendar, (3) ensures progress monitoring and fidelity of implementation, and (4) constructs a formative feedback schedule. Following completion of the organizational plans, continually communicate to staff the importance of prioritizing time and effort towards the identified instructional priorities.
Aligned Turnaround Principle(s)
2.2, 2.3, 1.2, 1.7, 5.2, 5.3
Rationale
The identification of two to three clear instructional priorities serves to align school efforts towards focused and sustainable school improvement. Conversely, the existence of a multitude of instructional goals and priorities can lead to a feeling among staff of being overwhelmed, confused, and unfocused. Initiative fatigue can diminish the effectiveness of improvement efforts in a school. School improvement plans can provide an avenue to prioritize efforts towards school improvement, but often more is needed to further plan and align staff efforts towards achieving identified goals. Professional development calendars, monitoring plans, and feedback schedules are tools that help to maintain focus by thoroughly planning efforts throughout the school year towards addressing instructional priorities.   Throughout the review it was obvious that the school is earnestly seeking methods, strategies, and programs that will result in higher levels of student achievement. To this end, a number of instructional and/or assessment programs exist and are being implemented with varying degrees of fidelity. However, multiple focus groups revealed a frustration in that programs intended to drive student achievement were not being given time to work before new programs were added. The result was a belief that school improvement efforts acted as temporary "band aids," rather than sustainable and systemic long-term drivers of student growth and achievement.

Recommendation 2

Implement a standards-based teaching/learning cycle that continually answers the four critical questions:
    1. What do students need to know, understand, and be able to do? (Plan)
    2. How do you teach effectively to ensure students are learning? (Do)
    3. How do you know students are learning? (Reflect)
    4. What do you do when students are not learning or are reaching mastery before expectations? (Revise).[1]
 	
Ensure the existence of a system-wide infrastructure of support that builds the instructional capacity of teachers as well administrators' ability to monitor and sustain effective classroom practices.

Aligned Turnaround Principle(s)
2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 4.3, 4.4, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6

Rationale

A standards-based teaching/learning cycle helps ensure students learn standards as well as essential concepts and skills to mastery. The continual application of the teaching/learning cycle creates a systematic instructional improvement process that ties learning to state standards and serves to focus classroom instruction through the creation of objectives and/or student "I can" statements. Furthermore, the teaching/learning cycle facilitates the use of multiple instructional strategies, monitoring student progress through the use of data, and implementation of academic interventions. This approach fulfills the urgency prescribed by Fullan (2008) of "focusing on the right work and getting better and better each day with relentless consistency."[2]
 	
Classroom observations and multiple focus group discussions concerning instruction made apparent a lack of systems concerning the planning of classroom instruction. Specific areas for concern were…
    o Lesson objectives were only aligned to the Indiana Academic Standards in 50% of observed classrooms.
    o Students were only able to articulate the lesson objective in 23% of observed classrooms.
    o A scaffolding towards a rigorous depth of knowledge was only apparent in 27% of observed classrooms.
    o Students were only provided differentiated instruction in 20% of observed classrooms.
 	
This data, along with general observations made throughout the School Quality Review, led the Technical Assistance Team to the conclusion that a more structured and cyclical approach is needed for instructional planning.

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[1] DuFour, R. & Eaker, R. (2008). Revisiting Professional Learning Communities at Work: New Insights for Improving Schools. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

[2] Fullan, M. (2008). The Six Secrets of Change. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Recommendation 3
Review, revise, and implement a core reading program for Tier 1 instruction during the 90-minute reading block that is guided by a standards-aligned scope and sequence in order to scaffold the instruction of scientifically-based reading, including the following: (1) phonemic awareness, (2) phonics, (3) fluency, (4) vocabulary, and (5) comprehension as per 511 Indiana Administrative Code 6.2-3.1-4. The core reading instruction should provide direct instruction for the whole class and small-group differentiated instruction for 90 minutes. Furthermore, ensure computer adaptive programs (e.g., MindPlay) are being used to enrich direct instruction and not serving as direct instruction nor taking time away from direct instruction.
Aligned Turnaround Principle(s)
2.2, 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 4.4, 7.1, 1.4
Rationale
A core reading program serves as the primary instructional tool to teach children to learn to read and ensure they reach reading levels that meet or exceed grade-level standards. The selection and adoption of an effective, evidence-based core reading program is a critical step to meeting school-wide literacy goals and initiatives. Schools can reap long-term benefits for children's reading acquisition and development by implementing an evidence-based core reading program that fits the needs of their students.[3]   A review of artifacts submitted prior to the SQR onsite visit revealed the school had not submitted a reading plan identifying a core reading program to DOE online during the 2017 window (June 1st-30th). School administration informed the SQR team while onsite the core reading programs in use were Wilson Fundations and Reading Wonders. However, classroom observations revealed little evidence of the identified core reading programs being utilized. Furthermore, principal and instructional leadership focus groups revealed expectations for guided reading time and 90-minute reading blocks were not being implemented with fidelity. Additionally, concerns were raised among the SQR team that the use of computer adaptive programs (e.g., MindPlay) were potentially taking time away from reading and writing direct instruction. It was noted that students could spend several hours of instructional time on MindPlay to earn the 30-minute credit required by the district.

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[3] Simmons, D. & Kame'enui E. (2006). A Consumer's Guide to Analyzing a Core Reading Program: A Critical Elements Analysis. University of Oregon, OR: Center on Teaching and Learning

VIII. Appendix A: Evidence for Remaining School Turnaround Principles

Background

We believe it is valuable for school and district leaders to have a summary of the TAT's findings and evidence for each of the eight Turnaround Principles. As such, this section of the report outlines key findings and supporting evidence for each of the Turnaround Principles that were not identified by school and district leaders as prioritized Turnaround Principles for this school.

This information is intentionally provided in an appendix to reinforce the importance of the previously stated findings, evidence, ratings, and recommendations for the school's prioritized Turnaround Principles.

School Turnaround Principle 1: School Leadership
Evidence Sources
Teacher Focus Group, Student Focus Group, District Leadership Focus Group, Instructional Leadership Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Teacher Surveys, Artifacts Provided by Muessel Primary School
Evidence Summary
Strengths   - Teacher, student, and district focus groups revealed the principal has clearly defined and communicated high expectations for students and staff in terms of school wide discipline and behavior. Furthermore, evidence of this can be seen in that student attendance has increased and discipline referrals and suspensions have decreased.   - The principal included and led the entire staff in the writing of the school improvement plan and grant application.   - On their survey, 75% of teachers agreed with the following statement, "Our principal is on a quest to see school improvement in every classroom."   - Principal interviews revealed the principal recognizes the importance of, and has the ability to, prioritize those efforts most important to school improvement.   Areas for Improvement   - The school and district vision/definition for high quality instruction was not evident in classroom teaching practices.   - Although evidence made apparent the frequency of classroom walkthroughs, it was unclear if the resulting formative feedback given to teachers is in a user-friendly format that adequately facilitates improved instruction.   - Interviews with the principal revealed the school mission statement fails to drive school improvement and needs to be collaboratively revised.

School Turnaround Principle 5: Effective Staffing Practices

Evidence Sources
Classroom Observations, Teacher Focus Group, District Leadership Focus Group, Instructional Leadership Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Artifacts Provided by Muessel Primary School

Evidence Summary

Strengths
- The instructional leadership team utilizes school data, classroom observation notes, and staff input when deciding on professional development.
- The master schedule provides teachers with daily common planning time for grade level collaboration.
- Teachers' contracted schedule provides time for professional development to take place every other week.

Areas for Improvement
- District, building leadership, and teacher focus groups revealed that a clear and effective hiring process to competitively recruit effective teachers either does not exist or has not been effectively communicated.
- District and instructional leadership focus groups revealed a lack of systems to internally build future school leadership.
- Although a professional development calendar exists, it is unclear how professional development systematically aligns to specific instructional priorities and practices.

School Turnaround Principle 6: Effective Use of Data

Evidence Sources
Classroom Observations, Teacher Focus Group, District Leadership Focus Group, Instructional Leadership Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Teacher Surveys, Artifacts Provided by Muessel Primary School

Evidence Summary

Strengths
- Academic progress is monitored by teachers during grade level discussions of student data and the updating of the school's highly organized data wall.
- Data Wise protocols, implemented during the summer of 2017, are beginning to provide structure for analyzing data.
- The principal is able to cite supporting data when discussing decisions and efforts being made towards school improvement.

Areas for Improvement
- A lack of data literacy limits teachers' ability to deliver targeted academic interventions to address specific student needs.
- On their survey, only 29% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Our teachers have scheduled time and a systematic process for analyzing formative assessment data."

School Turnaround Principle 7: Effective Use of Time

Evidence Sources

Classroom Observations, District Leadership Focus Group, Instructional Leadership Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Parent Surveys, PLC Observations, Artifacts Provided by Muessel Primary School

Evidence Summary

Strengths
- The principal restructured the master schedule at the end of the first semester to include a 90-minute reading block, as well as time for science, social studies, and writing.
- The district focus group revealed the school day will be extended by one hour beginning the 2018-2019 school year.
- On their survey, 86% of parents agree or strongly agree with the following statement, "Our school has a schedule that allows for parent communication with teachers."

Areas for Improvement
- The master schedule does not provide clearly designated time for interventions.
- In only 53% of classrooms observed, did students execute transitions both mentally and physically with minimal direction, resulting in lost instructional time.

School Turnaround Principle 8: Family and Community Engagement

Evidence Sources
Instructional Leadership Focus Group, Community Member Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Artifacts Provided by Muessel Primary School

Evidence Summary

Strengths
- The school invites parents to participate in trainings and services hosted at the school in connection with community partners.
- There is a Family and Community Support Specialist (FACSS) and social worker on staff to support families and students.
- The Family and Community Support Specialist (FACSS) sends a detailed monthly newsletter to parents and is reestablishing the parent teacher organization.

Areas for Improvement
- Students' access to after school programs provided by community partners has been restricted during the 2017-2018 school year because of bussing issues.
- Parent and guardian surveys are not administered on an annual basis. As a result, parental feedback is not consistently used as part of the school's improvement efforts.